

I claim:

1. A method for facilitating purchases of gift items that are made available for purchase from a host server, comprising the steps of:

5 a) retrieving at least a set of names of potential gift recipients from an address book; and

b) combining into a selection form at a client machine one or more gift items available through the host server and the set of names of the potential gift recipients.

10 2. The method of claim 1, including the additional step of enabling a user at the client machine to associate gift items with potential gift recipients and thereby define a set of intended gift recipients.

15 3. The method of claim 2, including the additional step of enabling the user at the client machine to associate a message with a potential gift recipient.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the message is entered by the user.

20 5. The method of claim 3, wherein plural messages can be entered by the user, and wherein the user can select any one of the plural messages for associating with a particular recipient in the set of potential gift recipients.

6. The method of claim 3, wherein plural messages are displayed at the client machine, any one of which is associable with a particular recipient in the set of potential gift recipients.

5 7. The method of claim 3, wherein the selection form further includes the at least one message which the user is enabled to associate with the potential gift recipient.

8. The method as in claim 2, wherein the association of gift items with potential gift recipients is made by selecting a radio button which is displayed at the client machine.

9. The method as in claim 2, wherein the association of gift items with potential gift recipients is made by selecting a checkbox which is displayed at the client machine.

10. The method of claim 2, including the additional step, once the set of intended gift recipients has been defined, of presenting at the client machine a shipping form which is automatically populated with the names and shipping information for each of the intended gift recipients, the shipping information including an address which is retrieved from the address book.

11. The method of claim 10, including the additional step of providing the names and shipping information of the intended gift recipients to the host server.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein the shipping information for at least one of the intended gift recipients is populated in the shipping form free of manual entry by the user.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein, prior to the retrieving step, a user provides permission to access the address book.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the address book is retrieved from the client machine.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the address book is retrieved from a third party server.

16. The method of claim 1, including the additional step of executing a component at the client machine which performs steps (a) and (b).

17. The method of claim 1, wherein the selection form displays, for each name in the set of potential gift recipients, any prior gift item associations that were made in a

previous session with the host server so as to advise a user of a possible repeat gift item purchase.

18. A method for facilitating purchases of gift items made available for purchase by a host server, comprising the steps of:

a) downloading to a client machine a component from the host server, the component including a selection template which coordinates with information in an address book which is accessible from the client machine;

b) retrieving into the component at least a set of names of potential gift recipients from the address book;

c) retrieving from the host server a set of gift items, each of which is associable with one or more names in the set of potential gift recipients;

d) displaying in a browser operating at the client machine a matrix of selection cells which is defined by intersecting rows and columns, one of the rows and columns denoting the set of gift items and the other denoting the names in the set of potential gift recipients; and

e) enabling the user to associate names in the set of potential gift recipients with gifts in the set of gift items by interacting with one or more selection cells to thereby define a set of intended gift recipients.

19. The method as in claim 18, including the additional step of providing the set of intended gift recipients to the host server free of manual entry of the names of the intended gift recipients.

5 20. The method as in claim 18, wherein the interaction with the selection cells comprises selecting a radio button.

21. The method as in claim 18, wherein the interaction with the selection cells comprises selecting a check box.